

## Graeme Charles on Co-operation in The Devondaler



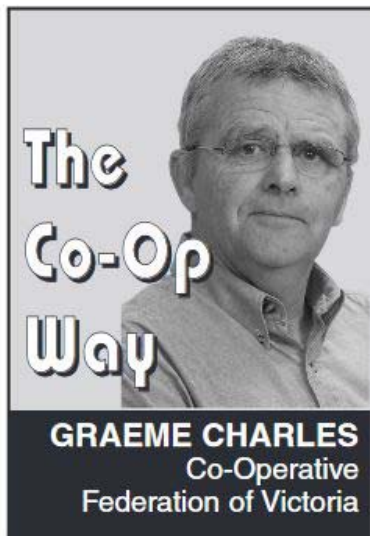
Graeme Charles was the Executive Officer and Secretary of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd between 1999 and 2002 and Deputy Chairman between 2002 and 2008 – the peak body for co-operatives in the Australian State of Victoria.

Between 2006 and 2008 Graeme Charles was a guest columnist for The Devondaler – the monthly newspaper of Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co. Limited. The Devondaler was established in 1986.

The Co-operative is one of Australia's largest with 2200 dairy farmer members and more than 2000 employees.

Twenty of these columns have been reproduced.

## Murray Goulburn one of only two Australian co-operatives in the ICA Global 300



The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) has released its provisional ranking of major member owned businesses worldwide. The Global 300 project has for the first time revealed the full importance of the world's major co-operatives and other mutually owned businesses e.g. credit unions.

There are just two Australian mutually owned businesses that have made the 300 list. They are, Murray Goulburn ranked at 193 and Dairy Farmers at 242. Presumably Dairy Farmers will be absent from the next listing, they have already set their sails along the pathway to demutualisation.

There may have been more Australian businesses on the list if there had been fewer demutualisations here in recent years. Sadly, Australia has led the way in demutualisations, and Victoria has actually led the charge. Think here of SPC, Ardmona Foods, Pivot, VPC and Bonlac. You can probably add one or two to these yourself.

What should be of great interest to us here is the significance of New Zealand co-operatives in the Global 300. They have 6 co-operatives ranked in the top 300 worldwide, and even more significantly are placed second in the ranking of countries with the highest contribution to GDP from co-operatives. Countries with the largest percentage of GDP from co-operatives ranked in the Global 300, are in order – Finland, New Zealand, Switzerland, Netherlands and Norway.

Let's hope that Murray Goulburn continues to fly the flag for Australian co-operatives, and better still, that it will soon be joined by others in the Global 300 ranking. But I won't be holding my breath waiting for the next to appear.

Incidentally, the International Cooperative Alliance is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents and serves co-operatives worldwide. Founded in 1895, ICA has 227 member organisations from 91 countries, active in all sectors of the economy. Together these co-operatives represent 800 million individuals. For more information take a look at [www.ica.coop](http://www.ica.coop) or the Co-operative Federation of Victoria's website [www.australia.coop](http://www.australia.coop).

2006



# List of Graeme Charles articles published between 2006 - 2008

Title	Date on Article or File – not when published	Identification Number
Why do you belong to Murray Goulburn Co-operative Company	1 September 2006	1
The importance of co-operatives in agriculture across the world.	2 October 2006	2
What Gives Co-operatives A Bad Name	21 November 2006	3
Murray Goulburn one of only two Australian co-operatives in the ICA Global 300	No date	4
UK Co-operative College and Co-operative Federation of Victoria helping Murray Goulburn members co-operative identity	!! December 2006	6
Review of The Democracy Principle: Farmer Co-operatives in Twentieth Century Australia by David Griffiths	12 February 2007	7
Particular Challenges for Co-operatives – Funding Expansion	12 February 2007	8
Particular Challenges for Co-operatives Part 2 Effective Democracy, or to put it another way, Members In Control	12 February 2007	9
Why are we ignoring co-operative solutions?	10 March 2007	10
A Co-operative AWB	29 March 2007	11
Could health co-operatives help solve the shortage of doctors in rural areas?	1 May 2007	12
Co-operative Demutualisation: the International Co-operative Alliance Response	6 August 2007	13
US Credit Unions buck Global Demutualisation Trend	7 August 2007	14
Co-operatives creating value for farmers and rural communities	4 November 2007	No number
Dairy Co-operatives in India	12 November 2007	16
Cooperatives get together in New Zealand to discuss the Co-operative Advantage of Dairy Business	21 November 2007	17
Retaining Co-operative Characteristics	25 January 2008	18

and Globalisation		
Agricultural Co-operatives are Financially Competitive	7 February 2008	19
Does Co-operation Improve Profitability for Farmers	3 June 2008	21
Small is sometimes beautiful	30 September 2008	Number unknown